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# BLACKMAILER CHARGED

## Blackmailing a fellow teen over explicit photographs has led to a Thames Valley adolescent being sentenced to community work. KELLEY TANTAU reports

A 17-year-old Thames Valley woman who blackmailed a fellow teen out of more than \$2200 has been sentenced to 150 hours of community work and has to pay the victim back.

Loralie Barbalich was just 16 when the offending occurred, but was sentenced as an adult in the Thames District Court on January 20.

The court heard that between December, 2020, and February, 2021, Miss Barbalich and the victim exchanged messages over social media.

Miss Barbalich offered the victim to purchase explicit photos and provided him with a bank account number. The victim transferred \$20 but did not receive any photographs.

Miss Barbalich then contacted the victim and told him she was only 15-years-old, and that her brother had found out about the messages.

She asked if the victim wanted to do another money deal, or get “smacked over”.

She told him she had his address.

Throughout the next few weeks, the victim made a number of transactions into Miss Barbalich’s bank account. In the end, the total payments amounted to \$2289.

Judge Paul Geoghegan told the court that the victim was of similar age to Miss Barbalich, and according to his impact statement, he was “anxious, nervous, and fearful”.

*“I don’t want to over-ice the cake, but it was pre-meditated, planned, persistent offending over a period of two months.”*

- Judge JP Geoghegan

He remained quiet about the situation, with the offending coming to an end only when his parents found out and intervened.

“The payments are not an insignificant sum, taking in his age,” he said.

Miss Barbalich’s counsel, Thomas Sutcliffe, asked Judge Geoghegan to consider discharging his client without conviction, stating a conviction for blackmail would be a “significant obstacle”.

“This young woman hasn’t had the best of starts in life... and at the end of the day, at this age, a conviction for blackmail would be a disproportionate response to the offending,” he said.

“The obstacles in front of her now are frankly insurmountable in terms of getting her foot on the ladder with employment.

“In the almost two years since [the events], there’s been no further offending... In my submission, this young woman is worthy of a chance.”

Judge Geoghegan said while a conviction would be a barrier, if that same logic was applied to all offending, the automatic result for young offenders would be a discharge without conviction.

“I don’t want to over-ice the cake,” he said, “but it was premeditated, planned, persistent offending over a period of two months. This was not an impulsive, one-off action by an adolescent.”

Mr Sutcliffe told the court that Miss Barbalich was on a benefit and paid \$250 a week to her parents. She could start paying \$25 a week in reparations to the victim until she obtains employment, he said.

Judge Geoghegan responded that “a really good sign of remorse” would be someone who knows a charge is before the court and who comes to the court with a year’s worth of reparation already put aside.

“That would indicate remorse. That would indicate an intent to compensate the victim,” he said.

Another factor to the case was an affidavit that said, at the time of the offending, Miss Barbalich was in a relationship with a 29-year-old man who suffered from substance abuse.

According to the affidavit, Miss Barbalich was homeless, on the street, and her life revolved around alcohol abuse. During this period, her partner allegedly encouraged

CONTINUED ON P4

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# Funding local roads not 'political football'

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

Slips, cracks and surface flooding: three things that are not new to the Thames-Coromandel but came out in force over Auckland Anniversary Weekend.

With the Minister for Emergency Management, Kieran McAnulty, stating that the damaged Kōpū-Hikuai Rd was not going to be a cheap nor easy fix, *The Profile* asked what the government would do to invest in the roading network throughout the geographically-varied district.

"Funding is part of it. This Government has increased the funding that's available to local councils for local roads, and it's increased the funding available to councils when you do have a severe weather event, like an emergency fund, but the demand on that fund is such that it got exhausted quicker than we anticipated.

"So, it's a much broader conversation around how this works," he said.

"Ultimately, we've got to have a broader look. We know that [these weather events are] coming, we know that they're going to be more severe and more frequent... How can we work with local government to try and prevent this?"

Minister McAnulty was in Thames last week to have a look at the damage the recent series of storms has inflicted on the district's roading network and properties.

He also spoke to iwi and com-



Minister for Emergency Management Kieran McAnulty was in Thames last week.

Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

munity health leaders, including representatives of iwi-based health provider Te Korowai Hauora O Hauraki and John McEnteer of the Hauraki Māori Trust Board.

He said the slip on the Kōpū-Hikuai Rd, which was still moving, was not going to be a cheap or easy fix, but he could give no details about potential cost or timeframe.

Instead, Minister McAnulty said he'd "love" if investment into Coromandel's infrastructure could be recognised nationally and not "treated as a political football".

"If we can just make a commitment across the political spectrum that if we want resilient roads in the face of climate change for rural communities, this is the sort of investment we need, and then it's no longer treated as something to cut back on maintenance."

Meanwhile, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's director of regional relationships in Waikato and the Bay of Plenty, David Spiers, said the agency was "very conscious" of the Thames Coast Road and State Highway 25a transport network as being a "lifeline in the community".

Higgins would be prioritising work along the Thames Coast Rd at the Ruamahunga Bay slip site to create a "network of accessibility" while state highway 25a was not available.

*The Profile* was not invited to view the slip damage at Kōpū-Hikuai, and were told that the call to allow media was made by Waka Kotahi and Civil Defence.

Numbers were limited as the site was still considered "live", they said.

Waka Kotahi regional transport systems manager Cara Lauder said she expected to have initial information on the next steps in the repair and restoration of SH25A to share with the public and stakeholders this week.

"We know how vital this transport link is for the region, and we understand that people are hungry for information and want to know when the road could potentially re-open."

Initial on-site work is likely to include drilling boreholes and excavating test pits to understand the strength and stability of the underlying foundation at the site and in the surrounding area.

Meanwhile, Coromandel MP Scott Simpson has called public meetings about the state of the roading network on the Coromandel Peninsula: February 17; 10am at Whitianga Town Hall; 1:30pm at Whangamata Memorial Hall; 6pm at Thames Civic Centre.



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## Thames Tides

Wed Feb 8		Thu Feb 9		Fri Feb 10		Sat Feb 11		Sun Feb 12		Mon Feb 13		Tue Feb 14	
Morning	3:42am 0.6	Morning	4:18am 0.6	Morning	4:54am 0.6	Morning	5:32am 0.6	Morning	6:13am 0.7	Morning	6:58am 0.8	Morning	7:48am 0.9
Afternoon	4:09pm 0.8	Afternoon	4:46pm 0.7	Afternoon	5:23pm 0.7	Afternoon	6:01pm 0.7	Afternoon	6:41pm 0.7	Afternoon	7:24pm 0.7	Afternoon	8:14pm 0.8
Best At	2:54am 3:15pm	Best At	3:35am 3:56pm	Best At	4:16am 4:37pm	Best At	4:57am 5:19pm	Best At	5:40am 6:03pm	Best At	6:26am 6:50pm	Best At	7:16am 7:43pm
Set	8:29am	Set	9:28am	Set	10:27am	Set	11:27am	Set	12:30pm	Set	1:35pm	Set	2:43pm
Rise	9:52pm	Rise	10:15pm	Rise	10:38pm	Rise	11:02pm	Rise	11:29pm	Rise	12:00am	Set	2:43pm

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**TIME DIFFERENCES FOR OTHER PLACES**

To determine tide times at the following places, add (+) or subtract (-) the given time difference from the Thames times listed in the calendar.

PLACE	Hr	Min	Hr	Min	
Coromandel	-	0	05	-	04
Whitianga	-	0	01	-	06
Tairua	+	0	10	+	21
Whangamata	-	0	03	-	05
Waihi Beach	-	0	12	-	12



# Landslides cause near misses

By ALICE PARMINTER, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

An elderly Thornton Bay resident and a truck driver on State Highway 2 had close calls last week following the bad weather from ex-cyclone Hale.

A slip on February 1 caused evacuations of several homes on Thames Coast Rd and Adams Rd in Thornton Bay.

One home, that of 95-year-old Dennis Raines, was red-stickered as the slip made its way into his backyard and on to the roof.

His son, Neil Raines, told *The Profile* his father was at home at the time of the slip but was unharmed. However, the home is now uninhabitable.

"The house was creaking with the weight of debris across the back, it was a metre high against the back ranchslider and that was all smashed in and against the roof," he said.

Neil said the hill behind the home was always likely to slip due to its steepness.

"I can't say I was surprised, put it that way, especially with the amount of rainfall and all the other slips around the place," he said.

Dennis Raines, a life member of the Thames Society of Arts, was in his home when a man mowing the lawn next door noticed the slip and ran to get him out. He has since been staying with his family in Auckland.

"It's going to be a very long, ongoing process," Neil said. "Not only has all the mud come into



Dennis Raines, 95, was at home when his Thornton Bay home was hit by the slip.

Photos: SUPPLIED

the back of his house, the house up the top on Adams Rd has lost some of its decking and is looking a bit precarious as well so it's quite feasible that that could slip down on to his house as well."

Despite the ordeal, Neil said his father was in pretty good spirits and was keen to get back to the coast.

"He wants to get back among his friends down there," said Neil. "He wants to be independent."

Neil said the community was quick to rally around Dennis following his evacuation, with offers of housing, fundraisers and general support.

"I would just like to show our appreciation, and his appreciation for all the support and well-wishers from the community," Neil said, adding that the Thames Society of Arts had been particularly supportive of its life member, as had the Waiomu Cafe.

A few days earlier in the Karan-

gahake Gorge, a similar slip came down in front of truck driver Shane Sattler on January 31. Mr Sattler told *The Profile* he was forced to take evasive action to avoid being swept into the river.

"I was just driving down the road and the hill fell down in front of me," he said.

Mr Sattler watched the car ahead of him speed through to avoid the debris, but didn't have time to follow. Instead he hit the brakes and swerved to the wrong

side of the road.

"There was no chance I was going to get through in time, when you see it coming down the hill," he said.

"My biggest concern was that car in front of me... I just seen him disappear and I wasn't too sure if he got collected or not.

"I had to make my way through the trees that were on the road and make sure that he wasn't trapped underneath it."

Despite the recent weather and the regularity of slips through the gorge, Mr Sattler said the slip still caught him by surprise.

"For as often as I travel through that gorge, you see evidence of slips but I've never experienced one coming down on the road in front of [me]," he said.

"It wasn't until an hour later that ... it must have hit home a little bit. My heart was pounding for the rest of the trip home. It's the last thing you expect."

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# Deputy mayor feared damage before storm

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

Even before the Auckland Anniversary storm that saw the collapse of the Kōpū-Hikuai Rd, Thames-Coromandel's councillors were concerned about how the constant battering of rain could affect the district's infrastructure.

At its meeting on January 26, before the two most recent weather events that caused further power outages, slips, and flooding, elected members discussed funding options following the storm of November 11, 2022, which saw an excess of 216mm of rain fall at The Pinnacles, near Thames, in a 24-hour period.

Councillors voted to fund the initial response and to return the roading network to the existing level of service - at an estimated cost of \$1.5m.

Council's share of repair costs totalled \$57,420, which will be taken from the District Retained Earnings Reserve, and \$379,900 from capital budgets, combined with subsidies from Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency.

However, deputy mayor Terry Walker raised concerns

about council's permanent reinstatement of its infrastructure.

Even before the Kōpū-Hikuai's collapse, Cr Walker offered a foreboding few ques-

*“Every year we go through this drama and it's major, but we don't really fix anything or future-proof it.”*

- Cr Terry Walker

tions to staff.

“We're spending this money, [so] how structurally sound should we make these things?”

“Is there any way of improving what we're doing out there, or is it just patch-up, patch-up, patch-up?”

Staff replied that following the receiving of funding from the transport agency, repairs would be completed to national standards.

“I see some places on the side of the road where we're patching up the same spot all the

time because they start falling away, and you go back again, and they're falling away again,” Cr Walker responded.

“Every year we go through this drama and it's major, but we don't really fix anything or future-proof it.”

According to council, the Coromandel has already seen 1.5 metres of rain fall so far this year, a figure the district would normally get to by June or July.

Coromandel-Colville ward councillor John Morrissey said he'd like “all councillors to remember this discussion” when it came time to focus on the next Annual Plan - which sets the budget for council's Disaster Recovery Reserve fund.

“I think [these disasters] are going to become more expensive and more frequent, and we can't keep going into retained earnings to save our backsides,” he said.

At its first meeting of the year, Thames-Coromandel District Council also received its draft Waste Management and Minimisation Plan and proposed to consult on the plan from February 3 to March 3.



# Strong shake wakes region

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

More than 11,000 people reported feeling a 4.8 magnitude earthquake that shook residents awake across the Thames Valley on February 3.

Occurring just after 2am, the quake's epicentre was 5km south of Te Aroha and had a depth of 6km, and according to GeoNet, the “strong” tremor was felt by 11,166 people - including residents throughout the Hauraki and Thames-Coromandel districts.

There were also reports that the quake was felt by people in Wellington, Northland, and the South Island.

A Waiomu resident said they felt a “solid shake” and thought their house was joining the Ruamahunga Bay slip.

Another local said it “started with a boom” and they thought it was an explosion.

The earthquake was the latest in a series of shakes that have rocked the Waikato region recently. A M3.9 shake occurred just before 7am on December 29, while another strong quake, a M5.1, also woke residents and damaged land at 5.39am on January 4.

A Te Aroha resident said they were “shaking with shock” after the latest tremor and thought it was perhaps time to get out the emergency bag.

“What more can mother nature throw at us?” he said.

**DETAILS: To prepare yourself and your whānau for an emergency, visit [www.getready.govt.nz](http://www.getready.govt.nz).**



# Blackmailer sentenced

CONTINUED FROM P1

her to sell naked photos online.

However, after standing the matter down in court for further clarification, Judge Geoghegan was told that there was nothing in the police file to substantiate this version of events.

It also wasn't mentioned to the writer of Miss Barbalich's presentence report.

“That gives me cause to exercise some degree of caution and scepticism regarding that account from you,” he said.

However, Judge Geoghegan accepted that Miss Barbalich had “not had it easy”.

When calculating her sentence, a 25 per cent allowance

was granted for Miss Barbalich's guilty plea, with another 15 per cent applied for her youth. A further cultural allowance of 15 per cent was granted, while a good character allowance was declined. This would have resulted in a sentence of six months imprisonment; however, the crown was not seeking a jail term or an electronically monitored sentence.

The application for a discharge without conviction was denied, and Miss Barbalich was sentenced to 150 hours of community work and ordered to pay \$2289 in reparation to the victim.



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# Near-record number of calls for Puriri

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

While 2023 has started quietly for the Puriri Volunteer Fire Brigade, the crew had one of their busiest years in 2022, with 72 calls for assistance.

Chief fire officer Wayne Cryer told *The Profile* that the brigade usually averaged between 50-60 calls per year, with the most on record being 75.

“Looking at the calls for 2022, we had quite a lot through the summer months where approximately 40 of those 72 calls were for grass and vegetation fires and burn-offs out of control,” he said.

“It was certainly a hotter and drier season compared to the start of 2023, which has seen us receive a lot of rain.”

While the brigade might have been busy with calls for assistance, they still found time to organise events for the Puriri community by hosting both an ‘Easter Rock Hunt’ and a ‘Christmas Eve Lolly Scramble’ throughout the year.

“We really enjoy seeing the community come and enjoy these events with us. The atmosphere is positive and inspiring and reminds us that we do have the support of our community for what we do,” Mr Cryer said.



A collage of images taken by the Puriri brigade throughout 2022.

Photo: SUPPLIED

“There is one young community member, who is about two-years-old, who is always

standing on the corner with a parent when the siren sounds and waves to the truck when

we’re heading off to help someone in need.

“We appreciate the gesture

and support.”

In July, 2024, the brigade will celebrate a significant milestone: 50 years of service to the community.

Mr Cryer said the brigade hoped to plan an event to mark the occasion.

In the meantime, the public needed to “remain vigilant” in the coming months, with the weather having the potential to become warmer and drier.

“There’s plenty of grass growth out there that won’t take long to start drying out after a few of those scorcher days,” he said.

“Dry and windy conditions can make it risky to light a fire or do work that can create sparks or heat.”

He encouraged the community to visit the checkitsalright website before lighting a fire.

**DETAILS: The Puriri Volunteer Fire Brigade is looking for more members to join their team, especially those who could be available during the daytime. The brigade currently has 13 members, made up of seven men and six women, and it would like about 16 members all up. To express your interest to join, or to find out more contact the brigade via their Facebook page or visit the station on a training night, Thursdays at 7:30pm.**



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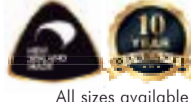


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# Back to school

School was back in session last week as the summer holidays drew to a close. For the new entrants at Netherton School, it was an exciting first week as they settled into Room One. Some students were returning after a term at school last year, but for others it was a completely new experience. ALICE PARMINTER captured the first day jitters.



Annabelle's learning begins in earnest as the children fill in their workbooks.



Lilah and Campbell get stuck into their phonics lesson.



Teacher Mrs Hack had the class captivated as they dove into learning about the letter S.

Photos: ALICE PARMINTER



Luke, Bodhi, Fraser and Leevi pay attention as the bell rings.



Maverick is a picture of concentration.



Mia reads her phonics book.

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 The Valley Profile



# Hannah Ashford-Beck's operatic year

## ONE YEAR ON

When *The Profile* first chatted with Hannah Ashford-Beck in January, 2022, she was gearing up to join the prestigious Dame Malvina Major Foundation Studio Artists development programme in Wellington. We see what life has been like for the former Paeroa pianist in the year since. **KELLEY TANTAU** reports

In 2022, Hannah Ashford-Beck lived the nomadic life of a singer, never staying at a single place for more than six weeks.

"All of my belongings could fit in my car," she said.

"When I had a gig, I was usually put up somewhere for the duration, otherwise I did a lot of pet sitting, short term renting, and staying with friends and family. My packing and moving skills definitely improved."

Hannah was part of the Dame Malvina Major development programme in 2022. Coordinated and administered by New Zealand Opera, it provides an opportunity for some of the country's most promising young opera singers to develop their craft.

Throughout the journey,

*"No show is ever the same; you've got to be prepared for anything to happen."*

- Hannah Ashford-Beck

Hannah learned the intricacies of putting on a performance, she gained confidence in her own ability, and, she learned to cut through the "nonsense".

"Opera is a world where there are often twice as many male characters than female characters, but also half as many male singers as there are female singers."

"Us girls have to be twice as good and fight twice as hard to get work. And even then that's not always enough," she said.

Hannah had the opportunity to learn from many singers, including Emma Pearson, Kristin Darragh, Madeleine Pierard, and Oliver Sewell; vocal coaches including Hikutaia-raised David Harper, David Kelly, and Ben Kubiak; and work with directors such as Jon Hunter, John Wilkie, Sara Brodie, Jacqueline Coats, and Mark Dorrell.

She was chosen as a chorus member and understudy for the role of Flora for a performance of *La Traviata*, but days before opening night, the Flora - played by Hannah



In 2022, Hannah Ashford-Beck lived the nomadic life of a singer, never staying at a single place for more than six weeks.

Photo: ALICE PARMINTER

Catrin Jones - tested positive for Covid-19.

"So I had to perform and sing the role of Flora for the dress rehearsal and opening night, which was an incredible experience," Hannah said.

"It was my first ever role in a full opera, and my first opera outside of university."

She said while she knew theoretically what it meant to be in an opera, she'd never before

experienced one with a professional cast and full backstage and costuming team.

"So much goes into it, even the smallest of details. You have to be prepared and ready to be standing on your feet, waiting around as a specific section of a scene is blocked," she said.

"No show is ever the same; you've got to be prepared for anything to happen."

However, Hannah believed

a change in opera in New Zealand was needed, and that a union ought to be created to protect young singers, musicians, and performers entering the operatic world.

"Like with anything, there can be a lot of nonsense a young female emerging in the workforce has to face," she said. "In regards to opera, I've always known how problematic it can be, especially as many were written during times where misogyny and sexism were the norm. It's been so interesting seeing how directors work with these sexist themes, and turn it into commentary on today's society or instead show the badass side of the female characters," she said.

"I think more of this needs to happen so that we can see representations of strong, independent, smart, and funny women on stage."

Hannah will now work with Wellington Opera for its production of *Lucia di Lammermoor*. She will be performing as Alisa, the only other female role aside from the title role.

She will then head to Europe to travel and potentially undertake some auditions in the United Kingdom and Germany.

**DETAILS:** To contact Hannah regarding scholarship, email [hannah.ashfordbeck@gmail.com](mailto:hannah.ashfordbeck@gmail.com) or phone: 027 562 8327.



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# Rural Life



## Cattle rescue after deluge

Close to 300 dairy cows were rescued from their Tirohia farm by local farmers after flooding on January 29. ABOVE: The flooded tractor sits on a stop bank and the cow shed is under water. Photos: PATSY ROBINSON

By GORDON PREECE

The Tirohia farming community joined forces to rescue close to 300 dairy cows from a 120 hectare property after it succumbed to “chest deep water” during recent floods.

Scott Paterson, who has owned Paterson Farm in Tirohia with his wife Alicia since June last year, told *The Profile* he shifted his stock on the afternoon of January 29 when he suspected flooding would occur.

“We knew it was coming be-

cause of the river levels in Te Aroha and it just slowly moved its way down over the stockbank, over the riverbanks and probably within a couple of hours [the land] was completely immersed,” he said.

All their stock was moved to the highest ground, he said.

“We had the community rally around and get the trucks organised and had mates all turn up to help us load up the cows.

“So the local community and mates have helped out heaps, it’s going to be a week and a half before we can start milking again.”

Scott said it was the second major flood he and Alicia had experienced at the farm.

“It’s a farm that’s prone to flooding, we accepted that before we bought the place, that’s one of the risks,” he said.

“We flooded in early July after we had rain for six weeks but not as bad as this one.

“Talking to the local guys, it was the first time they had seen the farm with that level of flood.”

Scott said while no cows were harmed in the flooding on January 29; equipment and some feed

on the farm wasn’t so lucky.

“The water’s gone right into the cow shed so we’ve lifted pumps up and everything else to see how much damage has been done by the water,” he said.

“We’ve lost some silage bales with the floods so it would be interesting to see where they are now. My tractor with a flood pump on it is sitting on a stockbank which is about eight feet above pasture level and the tractor’s half underwater, the tractor’s going to have to be redone.”

Scott said another farm vehicle

and the farm workers’ house were also flooded. He was talking with his insurance company, bank and accountant but they would need to wait for flood waters to recede before identifying the financial impacts.

“Our house was out of the way but our workers’ house, they’ve had to evacuate it,” he said.

“[The water] went through the garage but it’s just up to the floorboards in their house, so we just have to wait until the water recedes which won’t be for another five or six days probably.”

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# Rural Life

## Farmers see power in beetle brigade

By KELLEY TANTAU, Public Interest Journalism funded by NZ On Air

Two Mangatangi farmers have joined forces with Dr Shaun Forgie and his brigade of dung beetles, which, when deployed on to New Zealand paddocks, have the ability to improve water and soil quality and mitigate the excessive accumulation of manure.

At Robyn Budd and Hamish Browne's 106 hectare property, Black Pond Farm, Dr Forgie arrived with 400 dung beetles in tow, ready to be released on the pasture.

Hosted by the NZ Landcare Trust, local farmers and Mangatangi and Maramarua Catchment Group members heard what Dr Forgie - co-founder of Dung Beetle Innovations - had to say about the critters, of which there are around 7000 different kinds throughout the world.

He told *The Profile* there had been some challenges in getting local and central government to jump on board with the beetles.

"It's not so difficult when you



Robyn Budd and Hamish Browne, alongside Dr Shaun Forgie, get ready to release 400 dung beetles onto Black Pond Farm, near Mangatangi.

Photos: KELLEY TANTAU

talk to a catchment group that has this idea of sustainability and improving water quality, especially, but when you want to go up a level to councils or to regional councils and government, that's where frustration comes with the idea of thinking

more sustainably," he said.

*The Profile* first caught up with Dr Forgie when he visited another Miranda farm in February, 2021.

Since then, he said they had done at least another 100 dung beetle releases.

"It's amazing, New Zealand is small but it's still got a lot of pasture, and I drive down the road and still think: 'There's so much area that needs beetles'.

"We've got a lot of farmers getting on board, but individual farmers themselves can't

change water quality across the country, so really it requires larger scale pick-up by councils and central government," he said.

"We do have farmers coming to us and saying they didn't release [beetles] but they're coming onto their farms... They are spreading about a kilometre a year. So, eventually everyone will benefit. It will just be neat to get it done a lot quicker to see those benefits sooner."

At Black Pond Farm, Robyn Budd and Hamish Browne have the ethos of "nature knows best".

For the past six years, their cattle have provided them with free range, grass-fed beef from their "organically grown, holistic" block of land.

"We're always looking for new ways and better methods of dealing with things that aren't the best for the environment," Hamish said. "This is our start in the dung beetle world... we might get some more and increase the population."

"[It's about finding] natural solutions, really," Robyn added. "Nature knows best, so if we can help facilitate that process, that's great."

**DETAILS: For info on dung beetles and their release onto NZ farms, visit: [www.dungbeetles.co.nz](http://www.dungbeetles.co.nz)**



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# Rural Life

## Seal sightings sought

The Department of Conservation is asking members of the public to continue to report any sightings of kekeno (NZ fur seals) around the upper North Island this summer.

The citizen science project is a response to higher than usual numbers of dead kekeno sightings during the winter of 2021.

DOC conducted an initial survey between July and November of 2022. They received 102 sightings during this time - 81 live animals and 21 deceased.

The continuation of the project will provide valuable data to DOC about the seals' distribution and favoured hangout spots, and will allow workers to identify potential release sites for rehabled seals.

Marine Science Advisor Laura Boren said the extension of the project into summer would also provide information on kekeno during their breeding season.

"In summer, more people are out enjoying the coasts of New Zealand and the ocean around us, so that's more eyes helping us identify seals and provide us with sightings."

Of the 102 reported sightings, 65 contained clear images, meaning teams were able to make an accurate assessment of the animal's age class. Photos of dead seals are also helpful, says Boren, because staff can assess whether the specimen meets the criteria for necropsy. Freshness is a key factor - the fresher the photos, the easier it is to determine the cause of death.



**NZ's kekeno population is on the rise, and DOC is asking the public for sightings.**

File Photo: SUPPLIED

"From those necropsies, we'll be able to gather important information on the species, why some of the individuals have died, and what we can do going forward. For this reason, it's important to report as quickly as possible."

Anyone who wishes to report a sighting can email kekeno@doc.govt.nz with the date, location and whether the creature is tagged along with any photos. If possible, images should be of the whole animal from several different angles. Deceased seals should also be photographed from above and with something beside it for scale.

People are reminded to stay at least 20 metres away from live kekeno, keep small children and dogs at a safe distance, and never get between the animal and the sea.

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# Rural Life



Federated Farmers is calling for care and courtesy at harvest time.  
Photo: SUPPLIED

## Call for courtesy on road

Harvest season is in full swing and Federated Farmers is urging motorists and the operators of agricultural machinery to show each other some care and understanding.

Feds Arable Industry chairperson and farmer Colin Hurst said New Zealand's \$2.2 billion arable industry was an important part of export earnings, economy and employment - "not to mention growers of wheat flour for your summer sourdough".

"During harvest, combine harvesters, large tractors towing implements and other over-size agricultural vehicles often need to use public roads to move between different parts of the farm and between farms," he said.

"They're bulky and of necessity - and by law - move at lower speeds than other motorists.

"Farmers are asking other drivers

to show a bit of patience and common sense when coming across these large vehicles on the road.

"If a tractor or harvester does pull over to the edge of the road, take your opportunity to pass if you can do so safely.

"Most of them will be moving no faster than 30-40kph or so, so it's not essential to have the same several hundred metres of clear road ahead needed when overtaking much faster moving vehicles."

Refusing to pass can result in a long line-up of vehicles and that's when some drivers' patience frays and they do something risky, Colin said.

Federated Farmers is also urging the operators of farm vehicles to keep traffic flows in mind, and to remember their responsibilities in terms of protruding implements/headers and, where required, use of beacons and hazard panels.



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# Queen carnival held for Red Cross



As part of a Valley Profile series, **MEGHAN HAWKES** searches through old newspapers to bring you the stories Thames Valley locals once read about themselves.

**1918**

A Queen Carnival, a fundraising event, was held across the Thames Valley in aid of the Red Cross.

The carnival included district-wide Basket Socials – where baskets of food were auctioned to male bidders who won the privilege of eating and dancing with the woman who had prepared the basket.

Football matches and an Art Union, a type of lottery, were also held. The carnival lasted a few weeks and was topped off by the election of the carnival Queen.

In this campaign there were four candidates, Mrs Hague-Smith: Navy Queen; Miss Clendon: Soldiers' Queen; Mrs Bax: Valley Queen; and Mrs O'Carroll: Queen of the Plains.

Mrs O'Carroll, of Kopuarahi, won and was crowned Queen of Thames. More than seven thousand pounds were raised.

**GHOSTLY TALES**  
Tales of an alleged ghost were persistently circulating at Waihi where it was the talk of the town.



Queen of the Red Cross Carnival at Thames, Miss Kathleen O'Carroll.

Photo: SUPPLIED

A youth heading home one night after a dance was surprised by a spectral figure which walked out behind him and, with both hands, caught him by the hips and held him tight for a second or two.

"A ghost! A ghost!" shrieked the lad as he sped along the pavement in the south end of the town.

"It seems almost incredible that anybody could be reduced to a condition of abject terror by the tom-fool pranks of an individual mimicking in a material form something which did not exist," scolded the *Waihi Daily Telegraph*.

"This act is beyond a joke, and as there are many boys and girls

frightened out of their wits, it is hoped the man in blue will soon lay the ghost by the heels."

**COTTAGES WRECKED**

There were also disturbances at Waihi Beach where, at half hour intervals, the sea surged up with great force, 200 yards above high water mark. Great rollers, shooting up a tremendous height, made a magnificent spectacle but ten cottages facing the sea were wrecked.

**DIGNITARIES BOGGED**

The Minister for Lands and party, on their way to meet with deputations of settlers at Ngātea, left their cars at Kopuarahi to continue the rest of the journey by launch. The cars returned via the back road where two of them got bogged and had to be dug out.

Finally, after hard work and all hands assisting, they arrived at Ngātea. Ironically the Minister was in Ngātea to discuss roads, bridges and drains. In the course of a speech, he congratulated the settlers on the appearance of their district. He had travelled nearly all over New Zealand, and he was satisfied that very few districts would beat theirs when it was fully developed.

**LIME AVAILABLE**

Settlers in Miranda decided to co-operate to provide themselves with lime for agricultural purposes at cheap rates. There were 800 acres of sea shell deposited to a depth of ten feet, and a crushing plant and an engine for haulage were to be purchased. It was expected that an ample supply of lime will be secured.

## BOOK REVIEWS



**The Marriage Portrait by Maggie O'Farrell**

Set at the heart of the treacherous political world of the Italian Renaissance, this is the masterful story of a young woman's battle for her very survival. Florence 1560s, Lucrezia, third daughter of Cosimo de' Medici, is free to wander the palazzo at will, wondering at its treasures and observing its clandestine workings. But when her older sister dies on the eve of marriage to Alfonso d'Este, heir to the Duke of Ferrara, Lucrezia is thrust unwittingly into the limelight: Alfonso is quick to request her hand in marriage, and her father to accept on her behalf. Having barely left girlhood, Lucrezia must now make her way in a troubled court whose customs are opaque and where her arrival is not universally welcomed. A brilliant new novel from Maggie O'Farrell written with all the drama and verve that made her last book *HAMNET* an international bestseller.

**Desert Star by Michael Connelly**

LAPD detective Renée Ballard and Harry Bosch work together to hunt the killer who is Bosch's "white whale"--a man responsible for the murder of an entire family. A year has passed since LAPD detective Renée Ballard quit the force in the face of misogyny, demoralization, and endless red tape. Yet, after the chief of police himself tells her she can write her ticket within the department, Ballard takes back her badge, leaving "the Late Show" to rebuild the cold case unit at the elite Robbery-Homicide Division. Propulsive and unstoppable, this new novel demonstrates once again why Connelly is one of the best crime/thriller authors of our generation.



**Secrets of the Sea: The Story of New Zealand's Native Sea Creatures by Robert Vennel**

Following on from his bestselling "The Meaning of Trees", Robert Vennel turns his focus to taking us on a tour through the native sea creatures of Aotearoa. *Secrets of the Sea* is a fascinating introduction to New Zealand's fish and shellfish, weaving together history, biology and culture to reveal how these unique and intriguing creatures have shaped our lives. Ranging from sandy shores and rocky reefs to the open ocean and its cavernous depths, Robert Vennel celebrates the magic and mystery of the world beneath the waves. Lavishly illustrated with stunning photographs and fascinating historical illustrations. An essential New Zealand nature volume for everyone's bookshelf.

**Get Outdoors: Brilliant Boredom Busters for Kiwi Kids by Paul Adamson**

Award-winning author Paul Adamson brings us a timely outdoors activity book to encourage kids to explore and experience the simple pleasures and health benefits of getting outdoors. With almost 200 pages of activities and ideas, Paul shares his enthusiasm for the great outdoors through a wide range of activities. With clear instructions on how to build, grow, and explore our local outdoors environments, this book is as much an encouragement to parents as kids to pursue healthy activities that will foster a lifelong love of the outdoors. A fabulous resource for parents.



- Book reviews by Carson's Bookshop

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# 'Humble' Bill Rackham farewelled

**OBITUARY**

**Bill Rackham  
1941 - 2023**

William (Bill) Rackham was remembered as a "dedicated" Paeroa Volunteer Fire Brigade chief fire officer and "humble" family man.

Mr Rackham, who died on January 22 after a short illness, was remembered by his family and Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) for his fierce 56-year service to the Paeroa community.

His son Graeme, who served alongside his father in the mid-1980s, said there were many aspects to his father's firefighting career.

"He was a man of integrity, he was very generous and was very proud of his team of fellow firefighters.

"Not only was he a dedicated firefighter, as a young man he was a keen rugby player [for Paeroa West], he was very committed to his family, he was a perfectionist cabinet maker," he said.

"He will be overwhelmed with the love and support he receives from the community and his fellow firefighters. He would want to say thank you all very much for being with him and he would want to express his love and honour back to everybody else."

Graeme said his father's main highlights included the Paeroa Volunteer Fire Brigade centennial in 1995 and local and national waterway firefighting competitions.

"To be competitive, you've got to train four or five times a week,



Bill Rackham received the Queen's Service Medal in 2014.

so it was not unusual for him to be out on the competition track with his brigade colleagues training as a competitor in the waterways competitions," he said.

Son Bill Jnr, who also served with his father, said he was "very well respected" by the FENZ community but never sought recognition for his service.

"The fire and emergency work that he did was for the community," he said.

"It was fire brigade work right across the board and that included things like putting in smoke

alarms and helping with building inspections."

Bill Jnr said he still had vivid memories of his father dropping everything at home to respond to callouts.

"We can remember Dad being in the fire brigade for most of our lives," he said.

"Many times when we were together as a family, the siren would go during dinner times or in the evenings or whenever we were doing something and then Dad would head off."

"I'm in awe of the commitment

that volunteer firefighters including Dad put in towards their passion of helping the community."

Bill Rackham was born in Paeroa in 1941 and attended Paeroa Central School and Paeroa District High School, now Paeroa College, before departing his rugby career to join the Paeroa Volunteer Fire Brigade in 1967.

He was appointed chief fire officer in 1991 and was awarded the Queen's Service Medal in 2014 for his service to his brigade and community.

Paeroa Volunteer Fire Brigade



A vintage fire truck leads the funeral procession.



FENZ members in the procession down the main street of Paeroa.

senior station officer Paul Jackson said Bill's passing "left a big hole" in the brigade.

"He'll be remembered as a great chief, Bill's biggest legacy is his commitment to the community doing smoke alarms, he's done hundreds of smoke alarms around Paeroa," he said.

"I first started in 1990, he was deputy chief then, he was always a good honest bloke, and he was a bit of a gentleman but when the times got tough he knew how to pull the boys in line."

Bill, who had five grandchildren and two great grandchildren, died aged 81 at his Paeroa home. His service was held at Paeroa War Memorial Hall on February 1 after a procession down Paeroa's main street led by a vintage fire truck.

- By GORDON PREECE

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2018 Toyota Rav4, GXL, AWD, 2.5 Petrol	\$28,990
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Janella Munns of Splintas Firewood.

Photo: GORDON PREECE

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# CLASSIFIEDS - Deadline 1pm Friday

## Public Notice



### Trust

#### HUI-A-IWI

AM: Update on Current Projects  
PM: McCaw Lewis-Legal Advisors:  
MACA  
NTT Settlement Bill  
Corporate Whare  
**PAEROA WAR MEMORIAL HALL**  
05 March 2023 - 10am  
Contact: Tennille Hirama  
tennillehirama@yahoo.co.nz  
021-842-154

## Public Notice



### Proposed Temporary Road Closure

Pursuant to the Section 11(e) of the Tenth Schedule of the Local Government Act 1974, notice is hereby given that for the purpose of Beach Hop Warm Up Party 2023 organised by GO Waihi it is intended to close the following roads to ordinary vehicular traffic for the period indicated hereunder. During the proposed period of closure provision will be made for ordinary vehicular traffic, which would otherwise use the road, to use alternative routes.

**Period of closure:** Wednesday 22 March 2023, 6am to 3pm.

#### Road to be closed:

- Seddon St (from School Ln/SH2 intersection to entire Seddon St)
- Gilmour St (from Kenny St/SH25 intersection to Seddon St)
- Muller St (from the Seddon St roundabout to property No. 3 on Muller St)
- Haszard St (from property No. 24 on Haszard St to Martha St)
- SH2 (from the intersection of SH2 and Kenny St to the intersection of School Ln and SH2)
- Morseby Ave (from property No. 80 Moresby Ave to the SH2 roundabout)

Alternative provision for ordinary vehicular traffic will be made with signs, cones and barriers to redirect traffic on detour.

It will be an offence under the above regulations for any person otherwise than under authority of an authorised permit to use the road for ordinary vehicular traffic during the proposed period of closure.

Any objections should be directed to Transportation Manager on 07 862 8609 or info@hauraki-dc.govt.nz by 15 March 2023.

L D Cavers  
Chief Executive  
Hauraki District Council

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# CLASSIFIEDS - Deadline 1pm Friday

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7-2-2013  
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Applications close Friday 17 February 2023 (4.00 pm)

# PUBLIC MEETING

## Let's Talk SH25A

Coromandel MP Scott Simpson is holding three Public Information Meetings to provide an update on our Peninsula Roading Status. We'll be hearing from NZTA and TCDC representatives.

### Friday 17 February 2023

10.00 AM - 11.30 AM  
Whitianga, Town Hall

1.30 PM - 3.00 PM  
Whangamata, Memorial Hall

6.00 PM - 7.30 PM  
Thames, Civic Centre

[mpcoromandel@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:mpcoromandel@parliament.govt.nz)

0800 550 330



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## SUDOKU

86

Fill the grid so every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9

2		4		6	5	3		1
6	3		8	7	2	5		
				3		7		2
		6		5	8	4	1	
			6		4			
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3		5	7	8		1		6

EASY

3	1			4				9
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		2			3			
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		1	6				4	
		4		9	2			
5				7				2

MEDIUM

				9	6	1		
1			3					
	7	3		4	8			
2		4		8	3			7
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			9	6		3	5	
					1			4
		2	8	3				

HARD

86

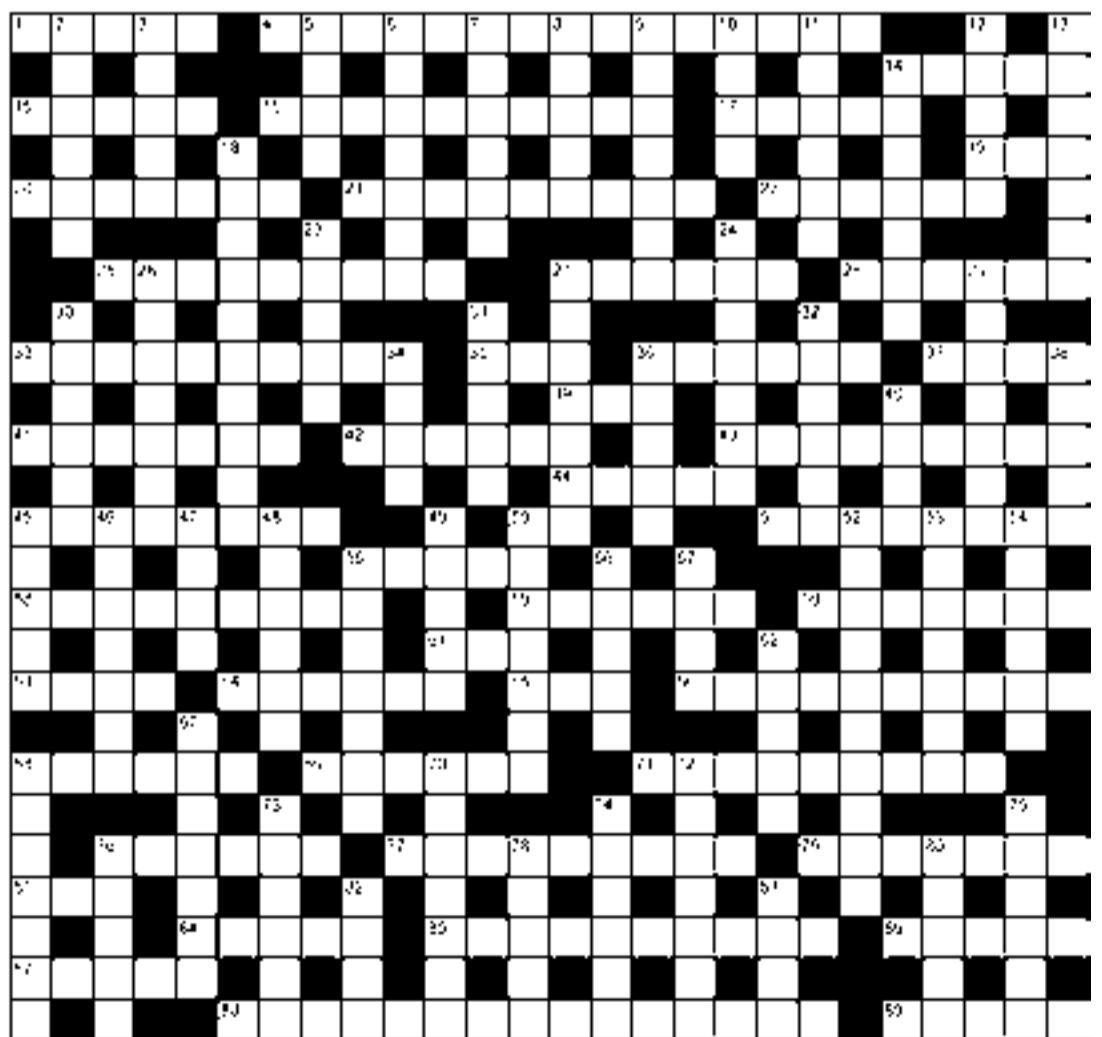
Puzzles © The Puzzle Company  
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4	2	8	5	9	6	1	7	3
1	5	9	3	7	2	4	8	6
6	7	3	1	4	8	9	2	5
2	9	4	6	8	3	5	1	7
8	1	6	4	5	7	2	3	9
5	3	7	2	1	9	6	4	8
7	8	1	9	6	4	3	5	2
3	6	5	7	2	1	8	9	4
9	4	2	8	3	5	7	6	1

## JUMBO CROSSWORD

106

- ACROSS**
- 1 Change (5)
  - 4 Malingering (8,3,4)
  - 14 Canal boat (5)
  - 15 Navigation aid (5)
  - 16 Taking of another's work and presenting as one's own (10)
  - 17 Hot drink (5)
  - 19 Able-bodied (3)
  - 20 Cowboy film, novel (7)
  - 21 Cold country (9)
  - 22 Earnestly religious (6)
  - 25 Disbelieving, doubtful (9)
  - 27 Night-time howler (6)
  - 28 Dealer in textile fabrics (6)
  - 33 Try sailing (anag)(10)
  - 35 Young male (3)
  - 36 Circuit-breaking device (6)
  - 37 Round handle (4)
  - 39 Climbing plant (3)
  - 41 Ahead (7)
  - 42 Atoll lake (6)
  - 43 Accord (9)
  - 44 Tiler's filler (5)
  - 45 Girl's name; fragrant shrub (8)
  - 50 Exists (2)
  - 51 State of disorder (8)
  - 55 Hairdresser's premises (5)
  - 58 Fixation with fire (9)
  - 59 Agitated (6)
  - 60 False belief (7)
  - 61 Rascal (3)
  - 63 Affair of honour (4)
  - 64 Reddish metal (6)
  - 65 Go wrong (3)
  - 66 Extended (10)
  - 68 Sea trip (6)
  - 69 Factory second (6)
  - 71 Estranged (9)
  - 76 Cheerfulness (6)
  - 77 Mountain chain (9)
  - 79 Long eventful journey (7)
  - 81 Long fish (3)
  - 84 Saturated (5)
  - 85 Facial appearance (10)
  - 86 Poisonous (5)
  - 87 Accounts check (5)
  - 88 Go out and enjoy oneself (5,3,4,3)
  - 89 Curt (5)
- DOWN**
- 2 Departs (6)
  - 3 Precise (5)
  - 5 Water hole (4)
  - 6 Country in Africa (7)
  - 7 Ageism (anag) (6)
  - 8 Question intensely (5)
  - 9 Sound-alike word with a different meaning (7)
  - 10 Decorative fabric (4)
  - 11 Bow user (6)
  - 12 Go aimlessly (5)
  - 13 Plume (7)
  - 14 Soldier's blade (7)
  - 18 Brainwashing hype (10)
  - 23 Simple song (5)
  - 24 Natural home or environment (7)
  - 26 Pungent red pepper (7)
  - 27 News (7)
  - 29 Become gelatinous (7)
  - 30 Gambling house (6)
  - 31 Distant in manner (5)
  - 32 Char (6)
  - 34 Hidden obstacle (4)
  - 36 Church council (5)
  - 38 Public swimming pool (5)
  - 40 Side (4)
  - 45 Quick (5)
  - 46 Witchcraft (7)
  - 47 Play charades (4)
  - 48 Haphazard (6)
  - 49 Natural ability (5)
  - 50 Examine (7)
  - 52 Radically new; daring (5-5)
  - 53 Accept as true (7)
  - 54 Go over (6)
  - 55 Tasted (7)
  - 56 Linger (5)
  - 57 Chime (4)
  - 62 Not married (5)
  - 67 Versus (7)
  - 68 Old hand (7)
  - 70 Distinguished (7)
  - 72 Secret sexual relationship (7)
  - 73 Mark of disgrace (6)
  - 74 Improvise (4,2)
  - 75 Mental giant (6)
  - 76 Forest clearing (5)
  - 78 Sufficient (5)
  - 80 Gain points (5)
  - 82 Church song (4)
  - 83 Manage (4)



### PREVIOUS SOLUTION

**ACROSS:** 1 Scoff, 4 Terrapin, 9 Barber, 14 Sabre, 15 Landslide victory, 17 Nerve, 18 Dye, 19 Message, 20 Police dog, 21 Deluge, 24 Surviving, 25 Author, 26 Vessel, 29 Unforeseen, 31 Row, 32 Shadow, 33 Tart, 35 Act, 37 Warp, 39 Artillery, 40 Impulsive, 41 Split, 42 Tendency, 47 Sapphire, 51 Sauna, 55 Autograph, 56 Playhouse, 58 Tome, 59 Pal, 60 Hops, 61 Costly, 62 Out, 63 Clavichord, 66 Tedium, 67 Suburb, 69 Compliant, 72 Tassel, 73 Centipede, 75 Demoted, 80 Tokyo, 81 Show the white flag, 82 Elite, 83 Unreal, 84 Sideshow, 85 Creel.

**DOWN:** 2 Chameleon, 3 Fades, 5 Eddy, 6 Ravioli, 7 Pecking order, 8 Noose, 9 Boycott, 10 Rink, 11 Earned, 12 Abode, 13 General, 14 Secured, 16 Legerdemain, 22 Bisect, 23 Cohabit, 24 Stopped, 25 Always, 27 Swahili, 28 Hoopla, 30 Nile, 32 Stale, 34 Theme, 36 Flip, 38 Ape, 42 Teach, 43 Notepad, 44 Edge, 45 Crayon, 46 Jumpy, 48 Predicament, 49 Hatchet, 50 Rum, 51 Shotgun, 52 Aplomb, 53 Participated, 54 Chic, 57 Unable, 64 Reiterate, 66 Trawler, 68 Utensil, 70 Maddens, 71 Jerkin, 72 Trait, 74 Toots, 76 Offer, 78 Core, 79 Ohio.



SPORTS

# Strokes of support for rowing club

By GORDON PREECE

Rowers and coaches within the Hauraki Plains College and Districts Rowing Club have benefitted from “high-level” training after receiving a \$5000 grant.

President Cory Simpson told *The Profile* the club was “thrilled” and “very thankful” for the New Zealand Community Trust (NZCT) grant, which allowed the club to invest in a “high-level” qualified coach named Franklin Hamilton to support more than 30 rowers and four coaches.

“Franklin’s in his fourth season with the club and we use him in two ways - both to pass on his knowledge to athletes but also to help develop our own local coaches for a long term legacy,” he said.

“He helps [the coaches] improve their technical knowledge and he also oversees the [coaching] programme which they then implement with the crews [singles, doubles, quads and octuples].

“We’ve got 30 plus rowers training full time... it’s a mixture of on-water training on the Piako River and fitness and strength and conditioning, and our coaches lead those sessions.”

Cory said the outcomes for the rowers and coaches through the guidance of Frank-



The Hauraki Plains College and Districts Rowing Club senior boys quad team in action.

File Photo: CONRAD BLIND

lin would enable the club reach its 2023 goals.

“The goal of the club is to create an environment where our athletes can be the best that they can be and thrive and improve,” he said.

“For some that may be win-

ning medals, for others it would be improving their ability in the sport, getting stronger and fitter.

“We’re halfway through [the season] - so far we’ve had the club rowing season and the big school regattas are starting now

in February and March.”

Cory said the rowing club, which is based in Kaihere Rd, Ngatea, was also “very thankful” for a \$2200 donation from the funds raised at the Ngatea Customs and Classics and Van Revival in December.

“It was great to see the community supporting the club,” he said.

“That \$2200 is going towards buying new equipment because boats don’t last forever, and we want to put some money aside to buy a couple of new boats.”

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**\$120** PER WEEK  
TOTAL PAYABLE \$31,164\*

\*\$119.40/week based on Swift Vibe Auto, \$25,990 plus ORC, total amount payable \$31,163.40, nil deposit 6.9% p.a. fixed interest rate, 5 year term, \$10.35 PPSR fee, \$130 UDC loan fee and \$200 dealer origination fee. On-road costs are payable to the Dealer. Suzuki Finance is provided by UDC Finance Limited. Lending criteria, fees and standard terms and conditions apply. Offer available 1 January to 28 February 2023. Excludes fleet purchases, demo vehicles and all other promotions. \*Clean Car Discount rebates are current as at time of printing and are subject to change. For more information and how to apply for the rebate visit [www.nzta.govt.nz/clean-car](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/clean-car). [www.suzuki.co.nz](http://www.suzuki.co.nz)

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